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SUBJECT: A FLURRY OF VISITS SETS THE STAGE FOR PRESIDENT
HU'S TRIP TO JAPAN

REF: BEIJING 1489

Classified By: Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dan Piccuta. Reasons 1
.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka visited Beijing April 14-15 to address three issues in advance of President Hu Jintao's May 6-10 visit to Japan: the poisoned dumpling case, the East China Sea dispute and Tibet. Japanese Embassy officials report that the dumpling investigation is going nowhere and that Yabunaka failed to make progress on resolving the East China Sea issue. A Chinese MFA Japan Department official said Beijing does not want to "link" Hu's visit to resolution of the East China Sea dispute. On Tibet, Japanese Embassy officials said President Hu appears unwilling to be "statesman-like" and reconsider China's Tibet policy. The two sides continue to discuss the contents of a "political document" to be issued during Hu's visit but have been unable to agree on points on Taiwan. End Summary.

Planning in Overdrive

12. (C) China is "frantically preparing" for President Hu Jintao's visit to Japan, MFA Asian Affairs Department Japan Division Deputy Director Lu Guijun told PolOff on April 16. Japanese Embassy colleagues echoed Lu's characterization. They claimed that they are "busier than they have ever been" as they prepare for Hu's visit and contend with a flurry of official visitors from Tokyo, including Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka, Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Chikao Kawai (in China to discuss UNSC reform) - see reftel) and a delegation of Japanese parliamentarians led by the heads of the Liberal Democratic and Komeito parties. PRC FM Yang Jiechi traveled to Tokyo April 17 to walk through Hu's visit, including his planned stop in the historic city of Nara (near Osaka), our Japanese Embassy colleagues report.

13. (C) Japanese Embassy First Secretary Akira Yokochi told PolOff April 17 that President Hu's trip will take place May 6-10. Yokochi believes the dates for the trip could be announced publicly during FM Yang's visit to Japan.

VFM Yabunaka Raises Dumplings, Sea Dispute . . .

14. (C) Japanese Embassy DCM Kunio Umeda told us that VFM Yabunaka was in Beijing April 14-15 to address three issues in advance of Hu's trip: dumplings, the East China Sea territorial dispute and Tibet. According to Umeda, the inability of China and Japan to resolve the poisoned dumpling case has created a "lack of trust" between the two sides. China appears to have reached a conclusion about the incident and is providing no additional information to Japan, he said.

The investigation is going nowhere and this is "very troubling to Japan," he added. China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) Japanese Studies Institute Deputy Director Ma Junwei told us separately that public fallout from the tainted dumpling issue delayed Hu's visit. While the dumpling problem may affect the atmospherics of Hu's visit, Ma said he does not believe it will have a significant impact on the visit's substance.

15. (C) Umeda said VFM Yabunaka also failed to make progress on resolving the East China Sea territorial dispute during his Beijing visit. MFA Deputy Director Lu told PolOff that Beijing does not want to "link" Hu's visit to the East China Sea dispute. This issue is "too complicated and sensitive," he said. CICIR's Ma agreed, saying that differences in opinion over how to demarcate the maritime boundary will not be resolved in time for Hu's visit. He predicted that President Hu and Prime Minister Fukuda will discuss the broad direction and principles for resolving the East China Sea issue but would not delve into specifics.

. . . And Discusses Tibet

16. (C) Umeda said VFM Yabunaka hand-carried to Beijing a "personal, carefully drafted" letter from PM Fukuda to President Hu, urging China to begin a dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Fukuda is under domestic "pressure," particularly from influential Buddhists, to take action on Tibet, Umeda noted.

17. (C) Japanese Ambassador Yuji Miyamoto told the DCM April 16 that the visiting chiefs of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Komeito Party, who were in Beijing discussing Hu's trip and other issues with Chinese officials, expressed to

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President Hu their concerns about Tibet. Hu told LDP Secretary General Bunmei Ibuki and Komeito Secretary General

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Kazuo Kitagawa that any Chinese leader would have reacted to "violent rioters" in Tibet in the way that the Chinese Government has. Ambassador Miyamoto assessed that President Hu appears unwilling to be "statesman-like" and consider adjusting China's Tibet policy.

Joint Document in the Works, Taiwan Included?

18. (C) MFA Deputy Director Lu said the two sides continue to discuss the contents of a "political document" to be agreed upon during Hu's visit. First Secretary Yokochi said Japan and China exchanged drafts but are unable to agree on points on Taiwan. The Chinese are pushing for Japan to take a stronger position on Taiwan in the document, while Japan would prefer to stick to what was stated in the Joint Press Communique released at the conclusion of Premier Wen Jiabao's April 2007 visit to Japan. (Note: In the April 2007 Joint Press Communique, Japan stated that it "reaffirms its adherence to the 1972 China-Japan Joint Statement.") "I guess China wants more," said Yokochi.

19. (C) CICIR's Ma opined that President Hu's upcoming visit would be a "good time" to sign an agreement with Prime Minister Fukuda. He noted that three generations of Chinese leaders had signed seminal documents in the history of the Sino-Japan relationship, including Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. The time is appropriate for a "fourth generation" Chinese leader (President Hu) to sign a new Sino-Japan document, said Ma. Depending on the results of working-level negotiations between China and Japan in the run up to the summit, the document might go into details or simply discuss the bilateral relationship in broad terms, he said.
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